DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 768 HE 029 370

TITLE	A View from the Inside: Minority Access & Success in Higher Education. Report of the Select Seminar on Excellence in Education.
INSTITUTION	Capital Area School Development Association, Albany, NY.; Hudson Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities.; State Univ. of New York, Albany. School of Education.
PUB DATE	Apr 96
NOTE	32p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Capital Area School Development Association, Husted Hall 211, University at Albany, State University of New York, 135 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12222 ($15).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Access to Education; Articulation (Education); *College School Cooperation; College Students; *Dropout Prevention; Elementary Secondary Education; Enrichment Activities; Higher Education; *Minority Groups; Outreach Programs; Parent Participation; Seminars; Student Development; Student Recruitment; Success

ABSTRACT

The report summarizes a series of four seminars in 1995 in which educators in the Albany, New York area gathered to discuss intervention to support the access and success of minority students in higher education. Participants included college, university, high school, community, and association leaders and representatives: a list is provided. Sections of the report explain the seminar process and objectives, the reason the topic was chosen for the seminars, root causes of the access and success problem, the urgency in addressing it, societal causes of the problem both within the community and beyond its control, the role of the college as a community member, the place of elementary and secondary schools in the education continuum, and the importance of parent participation in access and success. Both general and specific recommendations for action are offered in these areas: development of a conference series involving all stakeholders; increasing and enhancing community service efforts; teacher preparation; higher education marketing; a telephone hotline; a computer network of schools, colleges, and community agencies; school-university partnerships; after-school personal development programs for students; parenting skills programs; and specialty camps to provide enrichment. Some comments of seminar participants are included. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 397 768

Report of the Select Seminar on Excellence in Education

A View from the Inside:

Minority Access & Success in Higher Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Capital Area School Development Association
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A View from the Inside:

Minority Access & Success in Higher Education

April 1996

Sponsored by:
The Capital Area School Development Association, School of Education, University at Albany, State University of New York
and
Hudson Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities

Table of Contents

2 *Foreword*

4 *Introduction*

6 *Select Seminar Process*

8 *Select Seminar Participants*

12 *Why This Topic?*

13 *Root Causes of the Problem*

14 *A Sense of Urgency*

15 *Defining Success*

16 *Societal Causes/Community Effects*

17 *College as Community Member*

19 *The Place of K-12 Schools in the Continuum*

20 *Parental Participation*

21 *Making Choice a Reality*

22 *General Recommendations*

24 *Specific Recommendations*

27 *Conclusion*

28 *Afterword*

29 *Special Acknowledgments*

Copies of this report are available ($15.00 per copy including postage) from the Capital Area School Development Association, Husted Hall 211, University at Albany, State University of

FOREWORD

With many of today's minority students at risk of dropping out of school, and with some others inadequately prepared for college, we in higher education face a major challenge. In particular, we have a pipeline problem: large numbers of minorities – increasingly larger and larger numbers – entering the education pipeline, but only a few emerging at the other end.

Our future – our nation's future, our colleges' future – depends on our ability to find new ways of dealing with the pipeline problem. Keenly aware that solutions cannot be imposed, and buoyed by strong support from local school officials, teachers, and community leaders, we in the Hudson Mohawk Association have met and discussed, as indicated in the attached report, different ideas.

We have also concluded that:

– we should start our efforts as early as possible because early intervention – which most experts agree must take place no later than the third grade – is required for success.

– we should choose a realistic number of participants for the program. Since all of the schools involved – ***Albany Medical College, Cobleskill College of Technology, The College of Saint Rose, Empire State College, Hartwick College, Hudson Valley Community College, Maria College, North Adams State College, Regents College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, The Sage Colleges, Schenectady County Community College, Siena College, Skidmore College, Union College, and The University at Albany, State University of New York*** *– have existing programs for students of color that will be maintained, we do not want to undertake more than we can realistically do well.*

– we should complement and supplement what the elementary and secondary schools themselves are presently doing.

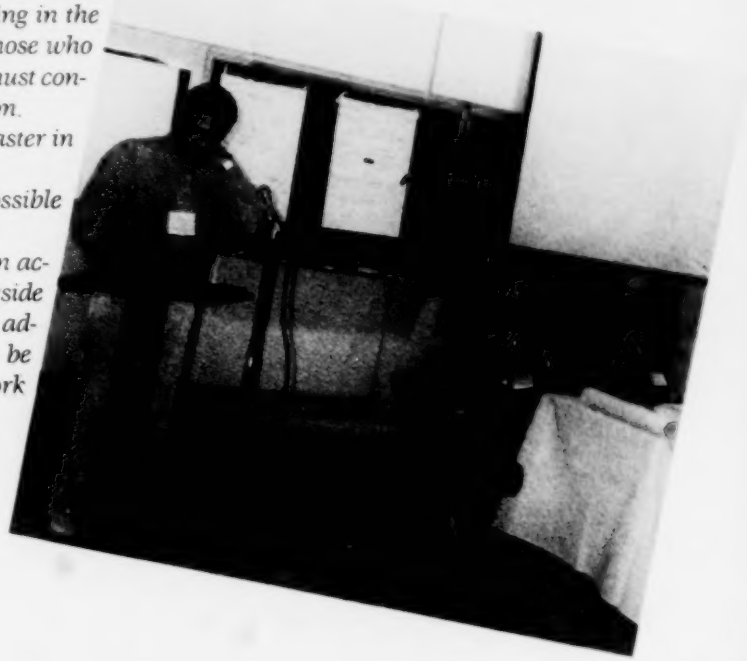
– we should insist that parents or a parent or a surrogate (if parents are working or uninterested) be involved because it does not make any sense for us to work with students in schools only to have our work undone at home.

– we want students participating in the program to agree to be mentors for those who come after them, since each student must contribute something back to the program.

– we must have a tough taskmaster in charge.

– we must set the highest possible standards for students; and

– we need to involve students in activities such as sports or theater outside of the classroom. Especially as boys advance to the fifth grade, there must be outside activities as well as classwork to keep students engaged.



What makes this effort special, what has been very well-received by the counterparts at the schools mentioned above, and what should enable us to obtain funding from outside sources, is the idea of a "magnet approach." Simply stated, the students that we will be working with in the course of the year on our individual efforts, will come together in the summer.

For example, Albany Medical School might become the center for students interested in medicine; Schenectady County Community College, the center for criminal justice; Skidmore, the arts center; and Union, the science center. Although the details with respect to this magnet concept clearly need to be refined, it seems to make sense for each of us, assuming that transportation and logistics can be worked out, to focus on one area of study in the summer rather than simply try to replicate programs on each campus. Yet to be determined is whether students should commute to, or reside at, each campus for a block of time each summer.

To lawyers, or even to late-night watchers of detective shows, the idea of determining guilt on the basis of motive, means, and opportunity is an old one. Our motivation as colleges for engaging in a program like this one is that we need to prepare our campuses for changing times and circumstances, specifically for the fact that in coming years our campuses will be less and less white and more and more black and brown. Our means for attaining success is demonstrated by the efforts that some of us have already undertaken efforts that have resulted in positive experiences for those students who have engaged in ABC or STEP or Upward Bound-type programs. And our opportunity for making breakthrough efforts is also at hand because, through the Hudson Mohawk Association, we have a range of institutional goals — from two-to four-year, from private to public, from liberals to professionals — that present students with opportunities in a variety of settings.

Arguably, one can determine a person's guilt on the basis of the motive, means and opportunity. However, in my judgment, we — the institutions that make the Hudson Mohawk Association — will be guilty if we do not take advantage of the opportunity we have to do something now.

All the very best.

Sincerely,
Roger H. Hull
President
Union College

INTRODUCTION

For many years the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities* has been sponsoring and conducting programs to increase the access of minorities to higher education. Many of these programs have been conducted in cooperation with school districts and other institutions in the Greater Capital Region. These collaborations have addressed the very real problems of creating a culturally, ethnically and socially diverse campus. These programs have yielded some good results, but the issues of access and success for minorities still exist.

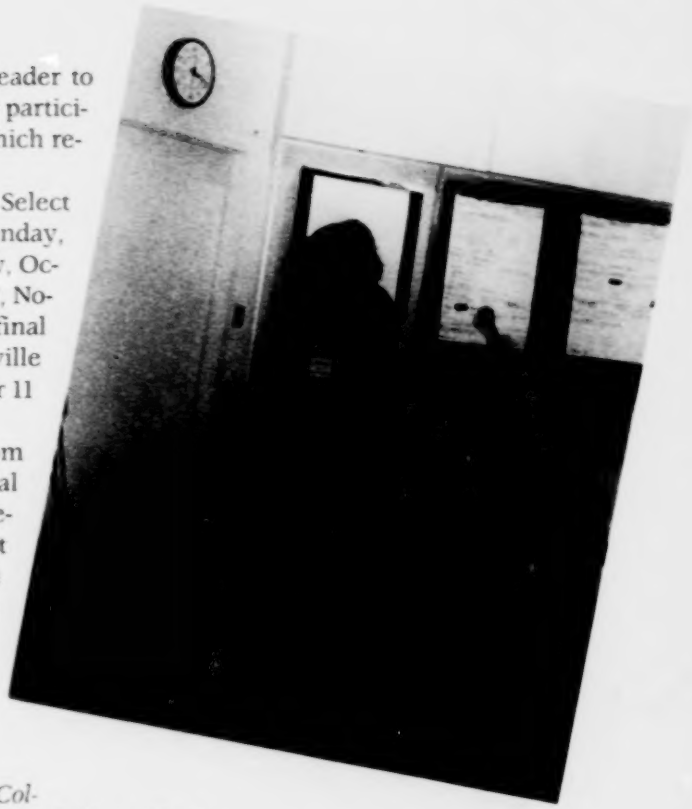
Because this social problem continues to tear at the fabric of our society, the Association has reaffirmed its belief that the ability to make a college education possible for every segment of our society is more than just a noble goal. It believes that the achievement of true diversity enhances the academic environment by guaranteeing a full range of opinions and cultural experiences. This reaffirmation bore concrete results when the Hudson-Mohawk Association secured funds to support this Select Seminar, coordinated by the Capital Area School Development Association, School of Education, University at Albany.

The Association's goal—to make college a reality for minority students and their families by enhancing and supplementing pre-college outreach programs through the collaborative efforts of higher education—became the focus of the Select Seminar. The participants in the Seminar were charged with developing a program, or programs, which would allow all of these groups—representatives from elementary, secondary and higher education, and civic organizations—to work together toward the common purpose stated. It was also the purpose of the Seminar to see that the groundwork was laid for the implementation of such a program or programs, even in these times of limited resources.

The report which follows allows the reader to "sit in" on the conversations of the Seminar participants and to study the recommendations which resulted from these conversations.

Thirty two people participated in the Select Seminar which held full-day sessions on Monday, September 25, at Siena College; on Thursday, October 19, at Regents College; and on Tuesday, November 14, at the College of Saint Rose. The final two-day session took place at the Rensselaerville Institute on Monday and Tuesday, December 11 and 12, 1995.

In addition to the financial support from the Hudson-Mohawk Association, additional funding came from the Capital Area School Development Association, the Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Freihofer's, the Golub Corporation, the Times Union, and the New York State United Teachers.



Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Law School, Albany Medical College, Cobleskill College of Technology, The College of Saint Rose, Empire State College, Hartwick College, Hudson Valley Community College, Maria College, North Adams State College, Regents College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, The Sage Colleges, Schenectady County Community College, Siena College, Skidmore College, Union College, and The University at Albany, State University of New York.

SELECT SEMINAR PROCESS

The Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA) has been sponsoring Select Seminars since 1985. These Seminars provide a forum for educators to consider major issues and make written recommendations to improve the quality of education. Reports of the Select Seminars are published by CASDA and circulated regionally and nationally. Reports have been reproduced by four State Departments of Education for use in professional development and orientation programs.

The Select Seminar process has received a great deal of attention and has been replicated across the country. It has been extremely gratifying to be credited by colleagues with developing what is essentially a quite simple format and process.

The CASDA Select Seminars follow a very simple structure based upon a set of guiding principles:

1. ***Participants need to commit adequate time—to work, to reflect, and to write.*** Most Seminars have been conducted for five full days spread about a month apart over the first three months with the final session being a two-day overnight retreat in the middle to the end of the fourth month.

2. ***A conducive working environment is very important.*** The Seminars have been conducted in "protected environments"—away from the work site, in quiet and aesthetically pleasing surroundings with special care being given to the quality of food and refreshments. We believe this clearly is a first step in communicating to participants that the Seminar is special and there are high expectations that the deliberations of its members will have an important result.

3. ***The Seminar participants are the experts.*** We believe these Select Seminars have been highly successful in part because of the high degree of personal and professional respect afforded participants and the central belief on which the Seminar series was founded: "that consciously competent teachers and administrators are the best arbiters of educational practice." While participants do extensive reading during the Seminars, visiting experts and lecturers are not usually a part of this experience. The participants of a Seminar are the body of experts.

SELECT SEMINAR PROCESS

4. ***Roles are "checked at the door."*** One's ideas must stand on their own, be debated, accepted, or discarded without reference to one's position or education.

5. ***Seminars are self-governing entities with organizers serving the group.*** The coordination of the Seminar is managed by personnel from CASDA. After providing the initial structure and on-going logistical support, they work to transfer the governance and direction from themselves to the participants. By the end of the Seminar, it is fair to say that the Seminar becomes self-governed with the coordinators taking direction from the Seminar group.

6. ***The experience is at least as important as the product.*** All Seminar participants agree that the process, the experience, is most important; in fact, the report might be quite different if the process continues over time, instead of representing but one point in an ongoing process when, although there is much agreement on important issues, there is some disagreement as well. Even so, the report provides an important documentation of the experience and serves to validate for each of the participants the energy and effort they expended.

The report does provide inspiration and help to those who read it and may assist in a modest way to continue what has become a very important national conversation on teaching and schools. We firmly believe that such an ongoing conversation can only result in better education for all of our children.

Thomas Alexander, ***Director, Community Outreach and Student Retention, Regents College,*** *7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203*

Patrick Allen, ***Director of Educational Studies, Union College,*** *Lamont House, Schenectady, NY 12308-2311*

Nelson Armlin, ***Associate Director, Capital Area School Development Association, The University at Albany,*** *135 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12222*

Kimberly Baker, ***Albany High School-South Guidance,*** *700 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12203*

Richard Bamberger, ***Executive Director, Capital Area School Development Association, The University at Albany,*** *135 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12222*

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

Earl Barcomb, ***GE Guidance Counselor, Schenectady High School,*** *The Plaza, Schenectady, NY 12308*

Laurie M. Bradley, ***Instructor, Biology Department, Hudson Valley Community College,*** *80 Vandenburgh Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Sally Brown, ***Assistant Director for Elementary Education, Albany City Schools,*** *Academy Park, Elk Street, Albany, NY 12207*

Annette C. Crawford, ***Instructor, Biology Department, Hudson Valley Community College,*** *80 Vandenburgh Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Mark Davey, ***GE Scholar Program Director, Schenectady High School,*** *The Plaza, Schenectady, NY 12308*

Ethel B. David, ***Director, Academic Opportunity Program, Bailey Hall, Union College,*** *Schenectady, NY 12308-2311*

Joseph DiBari, ***Troy High School,*** *1950 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Patricia K. Dow, ***Troy High School,*** *1950 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Ann P. Evancoe, ***Instructor, Biology Department, Hudson Valley Community College,*** *80 Vandenburgh Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Maureen Gillette, ***School of Education, College of St. Rose,*** *432 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203*

Lucia Guterriez, ***Albany High School,*** *700 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12203*

John Higgins, ***Executive Director, Hudson Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities,*** *91 Fiddlers Lane, Latham, NY 12110*

Robin Jacobs-Yanthis, ***Urban League of Northeast New York,*** *95 Livingston Avenue, Albany, NY 12207*

Meredyth A. Leahy, ***Dean, Liberal Arts, Regents College,*** *7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203*

Edgar Letriz, ***Assistant Dean of Studies, Union College,*** *Reamer Campus Center, Room 306, Office of the Dean of Students, Schenectady, NY 12308-2311*

Deanna Long, ***Liberty Partnership Program, Schenectady High School,*** *The Plaza, Schenectady, NY 12308*

Debbie McCartney, ***Hudson Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities,*** *91 Fiddlers Lane, Latham, NY 12110*

Patricia Minton-Peebles, ***Chair, Department of Dental Hygiene, Hudson Valley Community College,*** *80 Vandenburgh Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Victoria Onderdonk-Milne, ***Program Developer/School Counselor, St. Luke's School/Rensselaer High School,*** *1241 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12304*

Harry Peterson, ***Troy High School,*** *1950 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Anne Pope, ***New York African American Research Foundation,*** *State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246*

Collette Richardson, ***Albany High School,*** *700 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12203*

Joseph J. Vece, ***Troy High School,*** *1950 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

Dee Warner, ***Director, Academy for Initial Teacher Preparation, Education B-8, The University at Albany,*** *1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222*

Kathleen Wiater, ***Skidmore College,*** *North Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866*

Andrea Wilkinson, ***College/Career Advocate, GE Scholar Program,*** *Schenectady High School, The Plaza, Schenectady, NY 12308*

Joyce A. Williams, ***Troy High School,*** *1950 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180*

WHY THIS TOPIC?

The Hudson Mohawk Association commissioned this five-day long Select Seminar to encourage school districts in membership communities and representatives at large to collectively address problems of access and success in higher education. Their goal was to expand the number of children from traditionally underrepresented segments of the population who are prepared and motivated to attend college. One participant, a representative of the Association, reflected that "...there are a number of very good reasons for examining this situation and moving toward some process for improvement."

The first reason is ***humanitarian.*** It is, purely and simply, the right thing to do. We have rightly defined higher education as the most important and the most consistent factor in preparing children for the work force and as citizens of the community and the world. It is unthinkable to carve out whole segments of our population who are not or *cannot* take advantage of the promise of higher education.

The second reason is ***academic***. Exposure to a variety of opinions, perspectives, arguments, experiences is critical to the academic process. When only a sampling of the population is involved in academic pursuits, the process suffers and turns inward. In an increasingly global society, the key to progress lies in an ever-expanding capacity to explore from different perspectives.

The third reason for increasing both access and success to higher education is ***economic.*** Demographics clearly indicate a dramatically increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the next decades. Colleges, for the most part, will not survive if they are unable to attract the full community. We are making progress in coming to grips with gender equity issues and must move even more decisively to resolve issues of racial and ethnic diversity.

This convening, of individuals involved with special programs, traditional high schools, two-year community colleges, and four-year colleges, universities, and local communities each concerned about issues of access and success in higher education was an important step forward. We attended to contribute our individual observations, experiences, perspectives, and suggestions to an exploration of ways we might join together to prepare all children to consider and, perhaps engage in, higher education experiences. We attended because, as one participant passionately stated, "...there is so much talent sitting out on the bench waiting to get into the game, but they have to pass the boundaries of social pressure, low self-esteem, foolish ideology and rules, redtape and administrative " bull." We attended with the hope, and determination, that "...we might reorganize in individual and collective ways to celebrate our differences and create a new social order building on our strengths."

ROOT CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

Before we could seriously address issues raised about minority student access and success in higher education, we felt we needed to tackle the difficult task of attempting to define "minority." Exactly who were we talking about? Is the term "minority" pejorative? Are we using race to see who is underrepresented? When we talk about race are we also talking about ethnicity? Are ethnicity and race inextricably intertwined? Does the term minority refer to gender, to physically challenged, to economically disadvantaged?

Defining the target population of the Seminar was particularly crucial to one group because they were trying to identify the root causes of the access/success problem. Several members of the group believed that racism was the basis for restricted access. They clearly felt that this was a "color" issue and that all other inhibitions to access and success "stemmed" from racism. Others viewed the root causes through the lens of socio-economic conditions, thus including a larger segment of the population. Citing a global history perspective, one discussant argued that "...every racial, ethnic, religious group has been, at some time, exploited by another group...it's not just racism..."

The debate over the identification of the minority population in the Seminar title was described by one participant as "long and free-ranging." Both in group discussion and in private reflection, participants exhibited mild to extreme discomfort talking about racism's manifestations in education in particular and society in general. Phrases and considerations like "...you're letting racism cloud your point of view...," and, "...so seldom do Blacks and whites talk about their cultural truths and agree to disagree...," could be heard and read in notes. After the racial balance of one discussion group shifted, a participant wrote angrily about the tension and dissonance caused by what he perceived as a "...division of people of color from the group." Several sessions later, though, he reflected about the ways Seminar participants, a fairly equal mix of people of color and whites, "...came together in varied groupings during meals to relax, even though they seemed quite divided on issues at times." Writing near the conclusion of the Seminar, this same participant queried, "Could we reach an understanding about these issues - without the open discussion and the possible discomfort created by sharing this way?"

Questions of the adequacy of a given definition and the need for an explicit one continued throughout the Seminar. For example, one participant reflecting after the first session decided that using "traditionally underrepresented population" was flexible enough to include any and all those demographics might require. Another made a strong point that "...kids hate when you label them. They resist, letting it be known that they fit no pattern." Often participants reminded themselves and each other not to cluster children together into categories and to strive to view each as an individual. Gradually the debate shifted from needing to define "minority" as a descriptor of a target population or a category to the more useful strategy of identifying barriers to education for *all* children. This approach allowed the impact of both racism and socioeconomic factors to be fully recognized and emphasized.

A SENSE OF URGENCY

Summary comments from one participant addressed these concerns well: "While it may be true that the majority of students within the population of concern are 'traditional' minority students (African-American, Latino, Native-American), that fact is an accident of socio-economic reality and not an innate problem of race. Therefore, the program(s) to be considered would be aimed at socially, economically disadvantaged students as opposed to 'minorities'." This overarching view gave our task a sense of urgency in light of a 1992 *Phi Delta Kappan* reminding us of the following statistics:

One third of our nation's children are at risk for school failure even before they come to school.

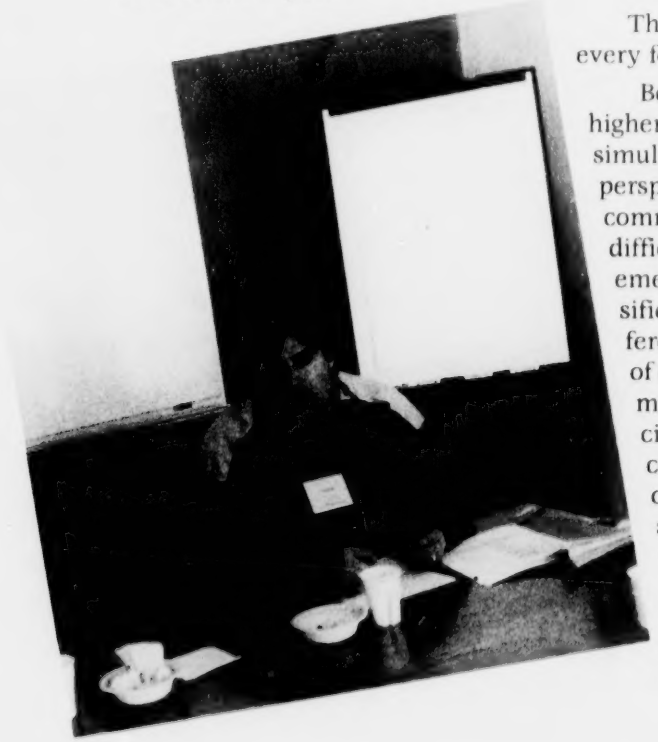
Twenty-three per cent of children 0-5 years of age live in poverty, the highest rate of any industrialized nation.

The rate of poverty among children is growing rapidly:

In 1970 one child in seven was considered poor.

In 1980 one in six.

In 1990 one in five.



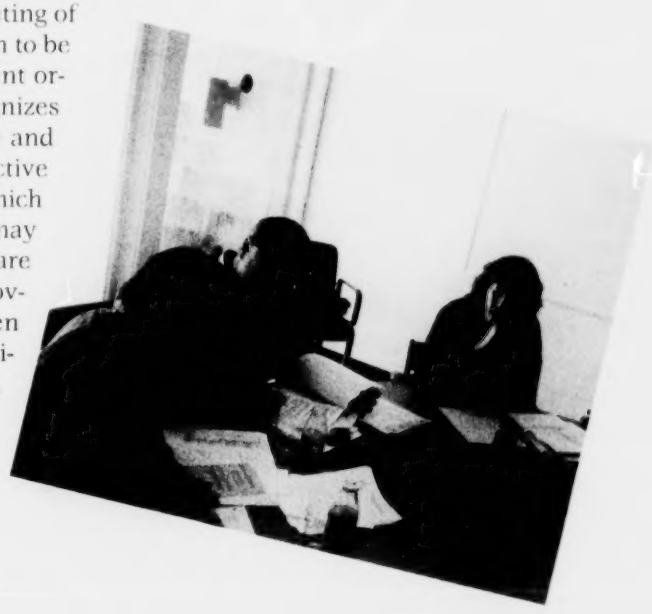
The prediction is that by the year 2000 one in every four children will face poverty conditions.

Because the problems of access and success in higher education seemingly must be investigated simultaneously through individual and systemic perspectives, we focused our discussion on the communities from which those children having difficulty entering the higher education system emerge. We identified three basic problem classifications: 1) misunderstandings of cultural differences; 2) exterior forces beyond the control of community members; and 3) within the community conditions resulting from exterior/societal forces. Identifying negative forces and conditions was relatively simple and those are outlined later. Our discussion of misunderstandings of cultural differences, however, was more difficult.

DEFINING SUCCESS

We each, based on personal experience and professional responsibility, felt sympathetic with the need to understand and appreciate cultural differences. One participant eloquently helped move us out of the realm of thinking about multiculturalism in a limited way and spoke of "...embracing differences." He talked of using "...a less rigid paradigm of expectations or performance" and suggested we should "...be more open about what constitutes talent/skill." Another spoke about the necessity to define success in such a way as to allow it to be highly personal and a reflection of the values of a culture. The extraordinary burden placed on children as they function in different settings was illustrated by a mother whose two children lived with her in an urban apartment complex. One child attended a public school in a program for gifted and talented students, the other attended a parochial elementary school and then a private high school. She spoke of the "...three worlds..." inhabited by her children and of the constant adjustments needed to assimilate those distinct worlds.

It seems crucial to our goal of helping children see themselves as having viable choices that we help them integrate the various aspects of their experiences and feel comfortable and confident in several cultures. A participant reflected, "Teach children that *diplomatic* assimilation is the road to possible success..." and that such assimilation *need not diminish* cultural pride in one's heritage. Or at least, agree, both within and outside a cultural community, to remove negative connotations of success and to broaden the scope of what is viewed as a successful person. A participant bemoaned the fact that our teens, in their most sensitive and formative years are labeled as "...nerds, *!**! bags, Uncle Toms, brownnoses..." if they aspire to success through education. In a commentary after the third meeting of the Seminar, someone noted that "...we seem to be trying to move from a society of independent organizations and individuals to one that recognizes and honors our quest for interdependence and relationship-building. This is a far more effective way to deal with the stereotypes and biases which we all experience, in one way or another. It may also be a way to remind all of us that we are responsible for ourselves and for those moving alongside us." Her statement was written about the Seminar group, but is clearly applicable to the issue of cultural understanding.



SOCIETAL CAUSES/ COMMUNITY EFFECTS

With general agreement that this Seminar could not spend a great deal of time trying to analyze and solve societal problems, we organized the root causes into two categories and listed them. Those broader issues outside or beyond the control of individual communities were labeled exterior causes. The effects exterior causes levied on communities with large numbers of minorities or disadvantaged youth were listed as interior community effects.

EXTERIOR ROOT CAUSES—beyond the control of community

Causes of Institutional Racism

- ***Economic pressures***—banks—real estate
- ***Job opportunities***—equal pay—promotion—retention
- ***Support systems***—educational opportunities (all levels), criminal justice system
- ***Political conditions***—voter registration—major party exclusion—representation (local, state, national levels)—education

INTERIOR ROOT CAUSES—within the community—caused by exterior pressures

Effects

- ***Economic opportunities***—poor housing, low employment
- ***Low educational expectations*** (employment over education)
- ***Family patterns***—single parent families, underage parents
- ***Social ills***—teen pregnancy, violence, drug use
- ***Shortage of role models***
- ***Low political awareness, participation***

Discussants agreed that the barriers blocking minority access to higher education and the obstacles impeding successful completion are extremely complex. Since this Seminar was very task-oriented and the group was determined to make recommendations that would at least begin active problem solving, they decided to focus on three distinct areas where they knew they could make significant headway.

COLLEGE AS COMMUNITY MEMBER

Hudson Mohawk Consortium Presidents have a long-term goal of "creating a welcoming community" for a diverse student body and providing an "environmentally supportive and safe academic" educational culture for learning. Early in our deliberations it was clear that colleges could not operate in a vacuum; that they had to connect with communities, all communities, to survive. One speaker questioned, "At what point do educational institutions choose to become involved with their potential clients?" Responding to statements about early readiness for schooling, a participant commented that she didn't "...see a great deal of communication between the K-12 community and higher education, yet it seems key to success in working with the students we've identified." She went on to emphasize that higher education is part of a "continuum."

This introduction of the notion of a continuum of learning goals, conditions, settings, and expectations created a firestorm of commentary. Typically in K-12 schools, teachers and administrators seldom communicate between levels or grades *within* schools and extremely rarely *between* schools. They just, as one teacher wrote, "...hand students over to the next level with a set of grades and little else." Curricular articulation rests with supervisors, State Education guidelines, and, perhaps, a curriculum committee. Those closest to the teaching/learning act, those best able to make connections are the most distanced from basic decisions. The disjuncture between secondary and higher education is even more startling. It seems self-evident that fragmented, disconnected schooling has little hope of creating the supportive educational community we feel is necessary to ensure students are successful as they make transitions from level to level and school to school.

Seminar participants identified early educational experiences as critical to ensuring that minority students (indeed, *all* students) see higher education as a viable choice. A participant noted that "...studies indicate that kids as early as second and third grades verbalize thoughts of dropping out or definite thoughts

of possible career choices." Those experiences occur both in schools and in homes/communities and are guided by parents, teachers, and other community members. It is crucial for these influential adults to understand one another's goals, know something of and respect each other's cultures, and provide consistent messages about the importance of education to children. Colleges and universities, too, must consider themselves integral members of the educational communities, and, as such, be full and active participants. Long before students are ready for higher education, they and their parents must be accustomed to seeing and participating in the programs/services/events of colleges in their communities. College students and faculties as visible contributors to community events, local schools, and special programs must be the norm.

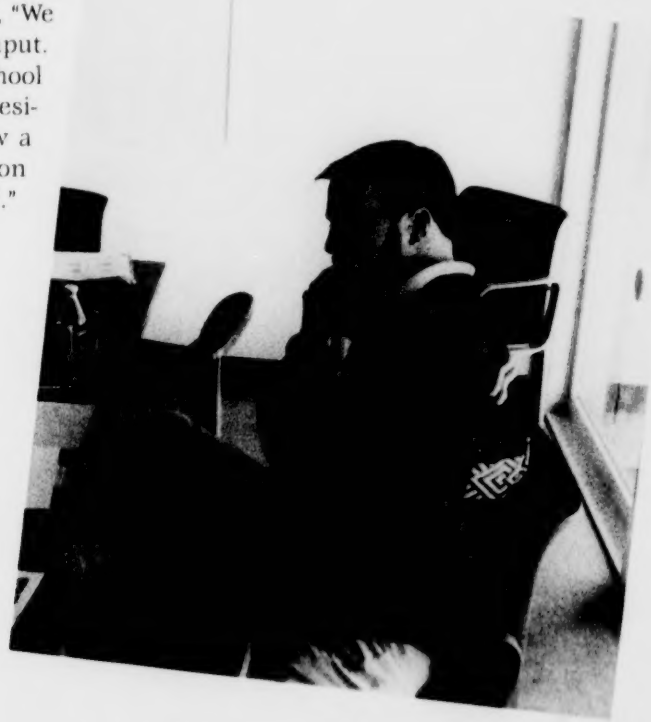
When students from an urban education class spend time in an alternative high school sharing their interest in reading with former high school drop-outs, both learn a new value for education. If middle school students and their teachers are bused to a college campus to use the biology lab for an after-school science program facilitated by a university faculty member, the idea of college is demystified. When parents in an urban community give permission for their high schoolers to participate in a summer youth leadership development project and see them gainfully employed and working closely with graduate students and city officials, the benefits of a college education become more evident. Many cameo projects exist, but there need to be more examples of full involvement by higher education faculties, urban communities, and students of all levels, providing models of active engagement in learning.

THE PLACE OF K-12 SCHOOLS IN THE CONTINUUM

Higher education has traditionally viewed itself as the "endpoint" in the educational continuum, perhaps even a rather exclusive endpoint. Seminar participants acknowledged the futility of this viewpoint early in their deliberations. Considerable time spent discussing problems in K-12 schools illustrated the need to restructure to emphasize:

- constancy—consistent messages about excellence, valuing cultural heritage, valuing education, building self-esteem based on competence
- perspective "taking"—meeting the needs of diverse individuals
- roles—need for diverse role models as teachers and mentors
- development of strong skills—critical thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, communication
- collaboration—adult and student application, school, college, community-wide

Teacher participants freely expressed their frustration with systemic problems like the restrictions of time, imposed mandates, limited opportunities for collaboration, general and specific resistance to change. They felt particularly strongly about impediments to parental involvement in the school. One shared frustrations, saying, "We in education tell parents we welcome their input. But I know when I have to call my children's school or go into the school, I still feel a sense of hesitancy and intimidation. I can only guess how a parent not schooled in the jargon of education must feel when talking with school personnel."



PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

To the uneducated parent, the parent who may have experienced problems in schooling and dropped out, or who may have been demoralized by school, the hurdles of supporting a child's desire to attend college may be overwhelming. As one participant wrote, "...minority parents may not be informed about options, aware of their rights, feel empowered to ask questions and express concerns..." Such parents may not be able to encourage their children to leave the cultural community of their birth to attend college. Parents may need the student at home or may reinforce the student's feeling that "...when something goes on in the family, I was expected to be there..." The burden of remaining close to and supportive of home and of functioning successfully in a demanding, unfamiliar college setting is a lonely one for the first generation college attendee. If members of the educational community are viewed as "...bureaucratic and distant" and seem to speak another language, then how can we possibly build a culture in every community that values education and works together "seamlessly" to encourage children to go to college?

"Messages we send to kids really do affect how they see themselves." Seminar participants repeatedly returned to the importance of children's views of themselves in the context of their families, schools, communities, and the world. Regrettably the messages many children at socio-economic risk or in cultural isolation receive are overwhelmingly negative in tone. Daily they see (profiles of) their peers describing low-achieving dropouts, violent drug-abusers, sexually irresponsible teens grasping for instant gratification in hopeless environments.

Children constantly exposed to such negativism desperately need to be bombarded with positive messages, demonstrating faith in their resiliency and talent and outlining and supporting ways to rise above the impoverished conditions in which they may find themselves. They need role models who know and stress the value of education, some whose lives and looks are congruent, to make their own identification with success concrete. (The musicians and theatrical stars, athletes, and television commentators who serve as obvious models for children of color may not be tangible enough.) Seminar participants emphasized, often, the need to stay close to young people, not to "...distance their thinking by 'program' considerations and 'systems' thinking."

Empowering children, parents, K-12 school teachers and administrators, community members, and higher education faculties, then, is our great challenge. "By connecting different elements, those in schools and in homes and communities, everyone is taking ownership, everyone is responsible." Ownership will have differing meanings for different roles. Roles may not be as clearly cut as we often observe them now. People serving as models may encompass a tremendous variety of ages, genders, socio-educational stratas. As one participant noted, "...role models must personally relate, not just be there...must provide an example of consistent support, willingness to take initiative, to find a way..."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MAKING CHOICE A REALITY

The charge to Seminar participants, framed by the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities' goal "to make the choice of college a reality for minority students and their families by enhancing and supplementing pre-college out-reach programs..." provided the impetus to be both practical and visionary. Three areas formed the bases for a series of both general and specific recommendations: in-school programs K-12, out-of-school programs K-12, and college programs including teacher preparation.

The following pages identify both general and specific recommendations for action on all levels of education and in the community. The topics presented for consideration consist of the following:

- Conference Series for all Stakeholders
- Community Service Program
- Teacher Preparation for Working with Minority Students
- Marketing Higher Education
- Phone Hotline
- Computer Link Between Schools, Colleges and Community Agencies
- Adopt a School Program
- Summer Specialty Camps with a Magnet School Approach

The objective is to maintain an approach which builds a continuum of support to the students while eliminating duplication of efforts across the community. This can be achieved by integrating **new** activities and initiatives with **existing** programs, structures and participants. A commitment from all stakeholders will achieve this initiative in a cost effective and efficient manner. The Hudson Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities and the Capital Area School Development Association are committed to facilitating this process.

K-12 teachers, higher education faculties, and parents and community members were all designated as critical to helping children see themselves as having higher education as a choice. College students, high schoolers, and middle level youngsters were also viewed as influential models for children at impressionable levels. Early in the discussion participants acknowledged that mobilization of such a diverse group to move toward a singular goal, would require communication on a scale unheard of in education. They were undaunted, however, because the Seminar itself represented a major step forward and every participant came away energized, prepared to act, and unwilling to allow the impetus created by the recommendations to be slowed.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Conference Series

The group proposed that planning begin immediately for a series of conferences on minority access and success in higher education. These conferences would:

1) Involve all stakeholders—state education officials, higher education faculty and admissions representatives, K-12 teachers and administrators, parents, community members, and students at different levels
2) Be held on a rotating basis at school, community center, and college sites
3) Emphasize importance of education at all levels
4) Develop a rationale for choosing higher education from varying perspectives (student, parent, business)
5) Link higher education to potential career choices
6) Provide information about issues of access such as financial aid, entrance requirements, programs, etc.
7) Highlight student work

Community Service

"Schooling" for most of today's students occurs formally in buildings located in rural, urban, and suburban communities. The faculties teaching in those buildings often are not members of the community in which the school is located. Seminar participants recognized that, in many cases, the teachers of minority children come from outside their communities. The potential lack of understanding, the inability to take and/or respect a differing cultural perspective, the difficulty of connecting schooling to the "real world" may severely limit teaching effectiveness. For that reason and for others we believe "community service" should be a universally required component of all those involved in the teaching/learning endeavor. Community service should:

- *Be required of K-12 teachers and students, and college faculties and students*
- *Foster communication*
- *Provide children, youth, adults with opportunities to contribute to diverse community projects*
- *Become a part of societal expectations*
- *Enable participants to more easily respond with respect and understanding to every individual's perspective*
- *Bear credit for formal programs at high school and college levels*

Teacher Preparation

Seminar participants recognized that teachers in K-12 schools are critical models and strategically positioned to help children build the confidence and skills they need to succeed in higher

education. They resisted the impulse to make K-12 educators responsible for all the educational deficiencies which might deter minority students from choosing and succeeding in college. Instead, conversations centered around systemic changes needed to encourage development of a teacher skilled in collaboration and perspective-taking. Participants thought it productive to concentrate on what might be done to change teacher preparation programs to reflect citizenship and professionalism in an increasingly diverse and complex society.

Since college and university faculties and students who are entering teacher preparation programs often base their views of schooling on their own experiences, it is difficult to alter perceptions of "education" and to change habits of mind and practice. Interjecting increasingly complex and diverse elements of communication, perspective-taking, and reflection takes time and consistent practice and modeling. Discussants agreed that a kind of "simultaneous transformation" needed to occur encompassing preservice and inservice teachers, teacher preparation faculties, and administrators. This transformation should result in restructuring the use of time and altering the emphasis on academic coverage to allow for communicative skill-building.

Teaching experiences in a variety of settings were recommended for preservice teachers and for faculty. Teacher preparation programs should:

- *By example, be exemplars of collaboration across academic and grade levels and between institutions and community organizations*
- *Provide frequent opportunities for faculty and preservice teachers to work in urban and rural settings*
- *Require community service projects as part of teacher preparation and encourage faculty participation*
- *Generate a greater awareness about issues of diversity and create opportunities for perspective-taking*
- *Construct rigorous requirements for preservice teachers to process and reflect upon their own experiences and shape their reflections into an articulated philosophy*
- *Work closely with academic faculties to encourage the brightest to enter teaching*
- *Increase the involvement of those in the field as active partners in teacher preparation*
- *Actively recruit and support more teacher candidates from underrepresented populations*

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION

Throughout our discussions the idea that attending college should be a normal, attainable choice for children, recurred, regardless of the topic. When we talked about K-12 schools, we developed side-bars about activities both intellectual and social that might help keep kids thinking about college. During our discussions of community connections, we frequently became excited about possible activities that might be arranged to encourage parents and community members to think about and plan for college as a normal, productive option for their children. Our conversations about general and specific college programs emphasized the need to be consistently and pro-actively visible in communities and schools.

The specific programs outlined below address many of the important components suggested in the more general recommendations. They invite active collaboration between K-12 schools, colleges, and community/business members. They increase communication at all levels and encourage the use of technology to reach more people and to use time more flexibly. The recommended programs stress support for setting attainable goals and target parents, students, and teachers. Most importantly, these suggestions begin to build a sense of normalcy and ownership of the concept of higher education - making real choice and real success concrete.

PHONE HOTLINE

Objective:	To share information
Parental involvement:	-Parents obtain homework assignments for their children, lists of school events, Dial a Teacher feature, notes from PTA meetings, etc.
	-Parents surveyed to see what they want on hotline
Student involvement:	-Check hotline for announcements, if absent
	-contribute information about school events
Community involvement:	-"advertise" community events (fees help defray costs)
Business involvement:	-initial donations of equipment and advertising
College involvement:	-advertise career days
	-set up application
	-offer homework assistance, guidance counseling
Time available:	Specific hours (after school, Saturday a.m., etc.)

COMPUTER LINE BETWEEN SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Objective:	Provide information about school happenings and agency services to students and agency representatives

Parent involvement:	-encourage students to access information
	-use system to highlight appropriate services
	-request topics for agency input
Student involvement:	-access program
	-match need and/or information to personal situation
Community involvement:	-provision of space/technology or people willing to provide information and respond to student needs
	-potential to match students with mentors
Business involvement:	-training of program designers
	-workshops on potential careers in agencies
	-field trip sponsorship to worksites
College involvement:	-provide student, faculty connections with internships
	-assist in coordination/facilitation between school and agencies
Time available:	-after school, weekends

SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Objective:	Provide funding/mentoring/professional contact for students. Connect minority students with minority professionals. Each school may have different needs.
Parental involvement:	-parents serve as mentors
	-participate in planning meetings
Student involvement:	-students work with mentors
	-serve as mentors to elementary aged children
Community involvement:	-minority churches adopt a school and serve as conduit or matching board
Business involvement:	-identify minority role models for students
	-allow mentors time for activities
	-fund mentor group activities
College involvement:	-provide students and faculty to help coordinate
	-research effective mentoring relationships
	-provide training assistance
Time available:	-weekends, after school, summertime

AFTER SCHOOL PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS

Objective:	To help students develop communication and organizational skills, coping mechanisms, time and stress management skills
Parent involvement:	-facilitators or co-participants with students
Student involvement:	-commitment to program
	-reflective applications of skills
Community involvement:	-facilitators
	-students learn and "payback" by community service

Business involvement:	-provide facilitators
	-underwrite mini conferences
	-invite to business conferences on appropriate topics
College involvement:	-business, education, psychology faculty and student presentations
Time available:	-after school

PARENTING SKILLS PROGRAM

Objective:	Development/enhancement of basic parenting skills including such things as goal setting, balancing personal and family commitments, use of technology, seeing college in your child's future
Parent involvement:	-attendance
	-participation in reflecting about applications
Student involvement:	-co-participants in appropriate programs
	-support for parental attendance (baby-sitting)
Community involvement:	-space and meeting support (food, baby-sitting)
Business involvement:	-underwriting costs
	-specialists for presentations
	-coordination
College involvement:	-presenters
	-coordination of longer term projects
	-hosting of meetings to bring parents on campus
	-coordination with schools (part of administrator or teacher preparation programs)
Time available:	-after school, evenings, weekends

SPECIALTY CAMPS

Objective:	To provide students with the opportunity for academic and cultural experiences in a variety of areas with a possible career focus
Parent involvement:	-arrange for and permit students to attend (may serve as optional day care)
	-possible teachers and presenters
Student involvement:	-commitment to attend
	-target first generation low income/minority
Community involvement:	-donation of space, facilities
	-assignment of summer employees to camp
Business involvement:	-underwriting portions of cost
	-allowing employees to donate a portion of work time
	-providing facilities
College involvement:	-organizational assistance as community service
	-facilities
	-personnel for teaching (students, faculty)
Time available:	-summer, weekends, school vacations

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the Select Seminar on Minority Access and Success in Higher Education was to bring together a distinguished group of teachers, administrators, college professors, and community agency representatives to engage in an extended conversation on issues related to making college a reality for minority students. Realizing that access to college is only the beginning of the process, participants focused their discussions on two facets of the problem. First, they worked to define model programs or projects that would lead to community outreach, encouraging parents and students to consider the goal of a college education the norm.

Secondly, they struggled to identify the possible barriers to successful completion of a two or four year college education. Participants began to re-think the social, academic, and organizational structures in higher education that might prove problematic to minority students. Their conversations created a heightened awareness of existing or potential impediments to successful completion of higher education goals for all students, particularly those "first generation" college students from populations traditionally underrepresented in our colleges and universities.

If this five-day Select Seminar were to result in *only* an increased understanding of the difficulties faced by minority students and in a broadening of perspectives of *only* individual attendees, then it could be declared a success. However, as the preceeding discussion and the specific project suggestions indicate, this varied group of educators and citizens moved well beyond the individual. They committed themselves in spirit and in action for humanitarian, academic, and economic reasons to do the "right thing."

AFTERWORD

The topic of this Select Seminar is a most important one. Today in the spring of 1996 the topic is of even greater importance because of the winds of change in the political world. The emergent struggle between the left and the right over affirmative action, welfare, health coverage, child care and other social programs question the direction our society should take in the future. The initiatives which the participants recommend in this report reaffirm their belief that we must be inclusive, not exclusive; that we must work for the success of all, not the already privileged; and that we all must work toward a just society, not just accept the status quo.

A most impressive example of people working toward social justice and equality in urban education was presented to the Select Seminar participants at its evening meeting on Monday, December 11, 1995, at the Rensselaerville Institute. Led by Dr. Donald A. Biggs, Professor of Counseling Psychology and a pioneer in the Urban Studies Program at the School of Education, University at Albany, a program outlining the work which had been done with urban students during the summer of 1995 was presented. Joining Dr. Biggs were William Cates, Robert Colesante, and Joshua Smith, all of whom worked with Dr. Biggs during the summer and will continue with him as the Urban Youth Institute continues during this school year and summer.

We thank these people for presenting the participants with a positive, exciting way to help young people become knowlegeable and active, informed citizens of their communities.

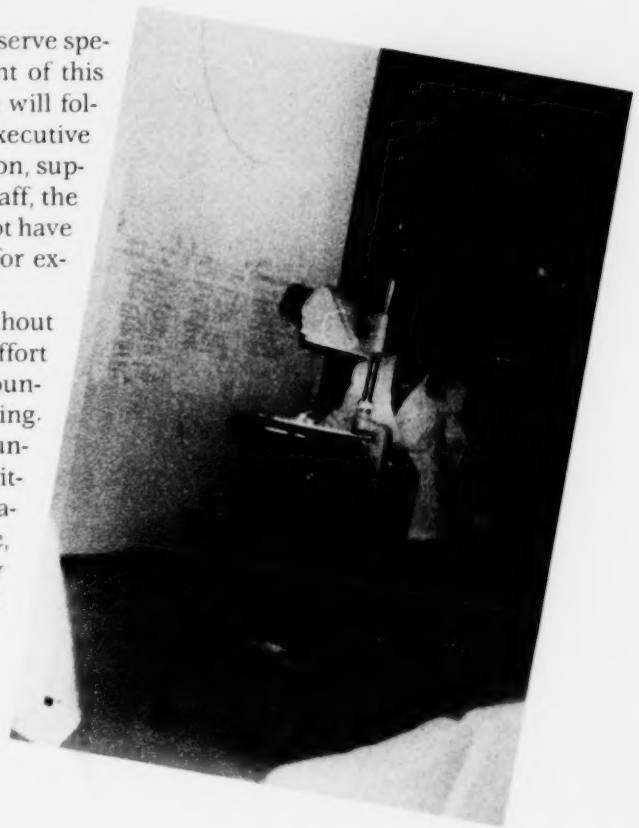
We also thank Dr. Dee Warner for writing this report: ***A View from the Inside: Minority Access and Success in Higher Education.***

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The creation of programs designed to support children from traditionally underrepresented populations through the educational continuum, has been of paramount interest to the Board of Trustees of the Hudson Mohawk Association for some time. As President Hull's comments in the Foreword of this report so appropriately point out, this is a concern of all of the institutions of the Hudson Mohawk Association.

There are two organizations which deserve special acknowledgment for the development of this report and the activity which we all hope will follow it. First, to Dr. Richard Bamberger, Executive Director of CASDA. Without the organization, support and encouragement of Dick and his staff, the Seminar which created this report could not have taken place. We thank him and his staff for exceptional work and assistance to us.

Second, to The AT&T Foundation, without whose generous financial support this effort would have been impossible. The AT&T Foundation expressed interest in this undertaking from our very first meeting. Clearly the Foundation and the Company are deeply committed to the concept of equal access to education for all of our children and they have, quite literally, put their money up to show that commitment. We are deeply grateful for their continuing support and assistance.



Sincerely,
John M. Higgins
Executive Director